

# Paranoid Times

By Amelia Nicol



Hung Up On Something?

What the worms  
Have worked to carvings  
Of language in dead  
Trees—

Which bark came closest  
To the antler rubbed trunk  
What measure

Of truth could depend  
On the pith of the branch  
It was first noted on?

What a neusaence the

Grasshopper and mosquito are  
We could get rid of them, along

with the birds and fish  
Who cares for the small

Why the birds sing  
so loudly during  
Rainstorms sometimes

The cruelty of song  
Taking apart the wind  
Breaking new rhythm

to my plain ol' beat

Ravens dropping down  
Weighted in falling snow

Obscuring their motions, their size  
the mountain ranges to clouds  
dropping along landscape

Wake parts of sky to fall  
with dark wings along  
the depths of snow

Test the weight of the air  
Feathered down

A good word

Broken to caterpillars wings

Shifting depths  
outside morphing shapes

Loses place, the same object  
From another angle

Now objects, bright shiny  
False eyes, care packages  
Rifts, winging around us

Space meant for closure  
Rebirths

Rural Americans

One-Hundred-Ten  
years later  
This Electrifying Initiative

Seems like it could belong

In a poem

By the Librarian Poet  
Maximus of Gloucester

(the well built Black Mountain  
man)

About a prisoner!



Divisions of space or worth  
The challenges of daylight  
Stretched to any depth  
Colored any way you choose

dusk dimming the lengths  
or shade, turning sights blue  
Or grey, flattening objects  
for new dimension

Oblivion of obviousness  
Tricking sight and motion  
Bright lit, washing away  
Fine detail or revealing stain

Gives potentials worth  
In saturation, in blinking  
Refrain  
Of objected subjects  
From any angle

A chair, and opaque lense  
The fish tales leaving  
Every background Blurred

Maximus of Glouchester  
To be known only  
For his physical strength

And drunkenness on camera

This and that taken from  
Anne Arbor  
to mean indian feasts  
Or ancient emperors ruling  
Over mud puddles

Lessons.

Poets opening for musicians.  
Kerouac.  
Poetry tv shows.  
Olson.

To the Kerouac  
Killed at a jazz show  
Or the Adelaide  
Who had a small tribe  
For just a little while

The drunkenness in the likes  
Of Maximus of Glouchster  
Has decided the diving  
Of any future dirty artists  
Library or no

These tendencies are known  
And the white collared  
Have better ideas  
For their poetry

Kept behind podiums  
Or slammed at open mics

No space between them.  
Save for the graces of politica  
Lost to any ages

The graces of higher arts  
These places for dignity  
And divine, not dirty arts  
And dirtier workers!

(tent meetings)

How elastic and versatile  
Everything touching  
Becomes, these strings

Connectivity assumed in motion  
Motive, Motif

Any language to describe  
touching beyond  
Even the elasticity of language

One decides these flavors  
Of manufactured consent

In any atmosphere  
Tasting the dawn  
Or the suddenness of dusk

Negative or positive patterns

For any yoke  
For any ease of levy  
Or catered balance

Stretched standards  
To abstractions of cult

Moralist Americanization

Civic housekeeping  
Dust enchanting the shifts  
Of light with glitter

Illuminates the bindings  
Turned backward

Exposes the pulp  
Instead of the spine

Parallels between Maximus and Jesus  
Pumpkin Kings with pauper dreams  
All the best for death and beyond  
Here, now: condolences, only

Becomes ownership of all word  
As a personage  
Or all prayer  
As though assured

Becomes a god, instead  
Of any freedom  
From any kingdom

Rosemary behind my ear  
Distracting memories  
Reports, counting  
The ways to climb  
A rope  
Or ditch

No matter the accuracy of measure  
From pressures in any airs, Pascal  
The same differences to torque  
Or any percentage, stretched

Mirror the effect or affect  
Of any balance  
Or choose instead  
To shift away, apart

Ever teacher or student  
Teacher or Father

Those times caught  
At  
Eating pomegranate seeds  
Just needed entire seasons  
Brand new weather patterns  
For new mythology

If it works, some philosopher  
Needed it or else  
His best friends  
Eating locusts, gifting weird  
Misconceptions

Kept centuries stored  
In memory, ate away  
The atmosphere  
In letters, sentencing

Becomes ownership of all word  
As a personage  
Or all prayer  
As though assured

Hunting down  
    God as a woman  
Or perceptions lost

To mirroring seas

Lyre voice ringing rhythms

Plain spoken worries  
    Deborah battling some  
Lost monster or way of speaking

A crow cawing  
Because he can  
Wide open fills with  
Plenty of bird song  
Must have encouraged  
This annoyance

or shut it up  
by noticing  
Timing

This wild environment  
Is so inviting  
It was all for you

Rest  
Assured

Mechanics losing limbs of the internet  
Disappear into their machines

Entire sections of data  
Mined illegally

Go missing

The periods of time between  
This problem for the system

I am

Needs to get with the program.

How much time could it take



A glass jar conducting  
Current, passing lit pricks

Rely on sound bites  
To steal their days from  
The working

Fat cats all agree:

These sparks aint worth Nothin'

Couldn't matter to  
The rain

Othello, to the bridge or nunnery  
Our civic updates  
Include the bomb factory, at least

Smiling shelter fallout salesman  
Shelling out bright color  
From Rockwell's paintings

Opportune armistice  
in cultures of war  
These later years prove

Fighting tendencies  
resistance, a backbone  
against the civic housekeeping

Moralist detective  
guessing games  
voodoo enchantment hive mind

Peace making, mongering  
genteel attack, if you can't fit in  
this war culture will sell you

Easily, without you ever knowing

these fragmented things

feelings to stories of mythology  
for hanging from, only

Mechanical monsters

Stealing any silence left  
In a world with so little  
Quiet

Gathered their needs  
From greedy trade winds  
Stuck indefinitely  
To loud, fast moving  
human-like  
Data

More valuable than coal, now  
The information  
Any information

Though, they'll never  
Admit this value

If I were to praise a god  
T' would be  
Zero

An almost imaginary number  
Which by use and belief in it  
Has transformed place-holding  
To disappearing differences  
And beyond!

Always  
Backgrounds working  
Senses of movement, still  
contracts of gazing, eyes seek out  
Refuge  
From a  
Page, seek the surrounding glints of fire  
Or easy air, wind bent  
to the ground shifts  
Sound's weight

An industrial flower  
ticking parts of wheels  
Together

To new gearing, slipping  
Between turns along any  
Ring or pinion

points turning wobble  
Around knots working  
Sideways to new angles  
Of teeth

Grown in, out in the wild  
Rusting apart blooms of metal  
Fractured

Outlines left blooming  
Dyed into thread

Takes a given weight  
    Expects return for expectation

The exact measure  
    Left to the air  
to imagination

Last leaves to fall  
    Pine needles trick daylight

Evergreen showing above  
    Weights of contrast  
Dividing parts of nature  
    With depth of shade  
    With shadow and dimension

The allowable greatness  
    Blooming to patterns  
Of industrial flowers

The working working working  
Never quit!

THE HoRrOr!

All the terrors of Jefferson  
Guessed his best defense  
For fair copy  
In a man who's library  
Burned to the ground

Begged for the help of the lending  
Anatomist, instead proudly fanning  
The flames

Locke, Hume  
The surviving anecdotes  
Struggle to breathe  
Or transcend the only enlightenment  
Of Poe & Boudelaire

Meaningless leviathan  
Always repeating silent  
Notes played on a glass harp



Edges, corners, railings  
No open fields  
Nor mountainous majesty  
Just these  
Loud assurances  
Claiming daylight  
From someone else's  
Eyes

And did you see  
The burning bush  
Outside the sad cafe?  
Any dignity for the poor  
Left to the trash duty  
Vomit scrub

Shortening our own handles  
Because we can't afford new ones

Notice our tools  
In the hands of wealthy thieves  
Our ideas, plots, curves of plow  
Were not enough for them  
They must possess  
Our own means of production  
And wealth

And we  
Stay poor  
Probably  
"on Purpose"

Lazy  
To the fat cats  
Sitting around, proud they  
Have never had to work at all  
Enough  
Time for  
This illegal activity  
Should have been plenty for  
Actual work  
But, no.

Sorry, fellas, great intentions  
the confederacy lost  
Though they could negate that loss  
Through Texas  
To another  
Bitter end

The North did hang our flag  
Out in worn antiques  
Tattered cross the continental divide, too

Hopeful unfortunates  
Have to tap along, at least  
For the green nurse, he brushes off  
The civil war reenactments  
Lucky dead after lightning storms

We remember all these passes  
These back roads don't scare us  
Turns around itself

Miss Mary Todd  
And the home front  
Natives

All of us with family  
On both sides by now  
Captured or no  
Are a civil, civic union.  
News.

Between  
The nexus and  
Apex, there's a zenith  
Line for angular escape but  
Miss it

For Every Verse, for any motion  
    togetherness takes  
Wave and part to wholeness

Wholeness to particle  
    To wave  
To depth of color

To the hues of shade

Valor painted in certain  
    Shapes of cloud  
Or heaviness of rain

Heavy rainbows pouring over  
    What's left drenched  
Or flooded